

came into the area from the waterfront along Harnett. McFarland's obituary said he was shot on Harnett at the Seaboard Tracks as he left his employers, Belden & Howie, on his way home to dinner. He was "among a lot of hands who it was thought were going to Brooklyn to take a hand in the riot." McFarland was first thought dead but was later picked up and taken to the hospital where he died.<sup>82</sup> Reporter Clawson recalled that as he was traveling through the city to report the fighting, "gunfire rattled all around us and bullets whistled closely."<sup>83</sup>

### Machine Gun Squads

One of the most intimidating components of the Wilmington Light Infantry was the machine gun squad.<sup>84</sup> The squad manned a rapid-firing Colt gun capable of firing 420 .23 caliber bullets per minute.<sup>85</sup> Purchased by local business interests, the gun was mounted on a two-horse drawn wagon furnished by Orrell's Livery Stables and driven by Pierre Harriss. Reporter Clawson later praised the city's forward-thinking attitude in purchasing the gun as a display of wisdom.<sup>86</sup>

Captain William R. Kenan and 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Charles H. White led the WLI gun squad: Robert Rankin, John Furlong, Edward Furlong, James Williams, John Quelch, and William Whitney. Although the gun was

under the command of the WLI, all of the men were not members of the WLI.<sup>87</sup> The members of the WLI and machine gun squad believed that showing the gun in the black sections of the city would intimidate them into quietude. Later recollections also indicate that the gun had a calming effect on white rioters who were out of the control of the military.<sup>88</sup>

The squad hauled the machine gun through Brooklyn after first crossing over the Fourth Street Bridge and into the scene of the first shots. As it proceeded through town, the crew was fired upon near the intersection of Sixth and Brunswick, just on the north side of the Sixth Street bridge. The gunners were armed with rifles, and they returned fire, killing as many as 25 black men at that intersection.<sup>89</sup> The gun crew was also engaged in fighting in the vicinity of Manhattan Park. African American attorney William Henderson claimed that a rapid-fire gun was fired into a house, killing three blacks inside.<sup>90</sup> The squad returned the gun to the armory only to be sent out again to guard the bridge into town at Hilton Park. The squad was responding to rumors that blacks from the small village of Navassa just west of Wilmington across the

<sup>82</sup> *Wilmington Messenger* November 13, 1898.

<sup>83</sup> Clawson, "Recollections and Memories."

<sup>84</sup> The machine gun purchased by the businessmen was taken out on river and demonstrated for black leaders on November 1, just before the election as an intimidation tool. *Contested Election Case*, 344.

<sup>85</sup> Testimony from retired Confederate artillery Colonel John W. Atkinson conflicts with that of Charles H. White, a member of the machine gun squadron, as to the type of rapid fire gun used by the WLI. Atkinson said he thought the gun was a Gatlin that was a "very rapid firing gun" whereas White recalled the weapon was a Colt that could fire 420 shots per minute. *Contested Election Case*, 267, 344.

<sup>86</sup> Clawson, "Recollections and Memories."

<sup>87</sup> Hayden, *WLI*, 90. It is interesting to note that several of the men on the machine gun squad were members of Company K.

<sup>88</sup> Clawson, "Recollections and Memories."

<sup>89</sup> Hayden recounted the shooting of 25 men at the intersection twice in his work, marking through it once and replacing it at a different location in the text. He also stated that only one man was shot and killed at Sixth and Brunswick Streets by the machine gunners. In reading various accounts of the activities of the machine gun squad and the Red Shirts, it is possible that the gunners did only kill one man at that intersection and that the other 25, if actually killed, were individuals killed or wounded near the location by Red Shirts. It is interesting, though, that Hayden felt the need to write that 25 were killed by the machine guns at that intersection twice. Hayden, *WLI*, 89-92.

<sup>90</sup> *Indianapolis Freeman*, December 3, 1898.